

*To Volk. D. Stone Litt. D.  
With Sincere regards of  
Julius F. Sachse*

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A GERMAN POEM

BY

**Frederick Augustus Mühlberg**

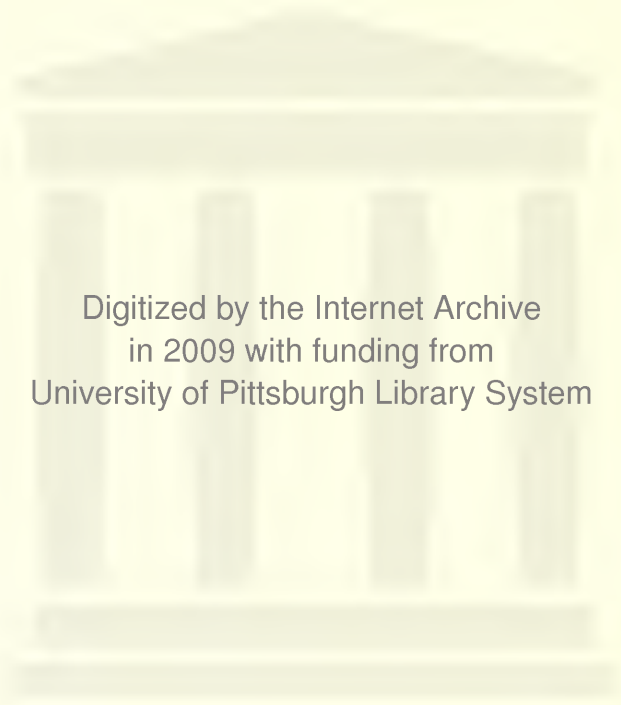
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JULIUS FRIEDRICH SACHSE

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FREDERICK AUGUSTUS MUHLENBERG.

Born 2d. January 1750.  
Died 4th. June 1801.

*From the original painting, in the possession of the same.*

*Robert R. R. R.*







# A GERMAN POEM

BY

Frederick Augustus Mühlenberg

BY

JULIUS FRIEDRICH SACHSE

LIFE-MEMBER HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,  
PENNA-GERMAN SOCIETY, ETC.

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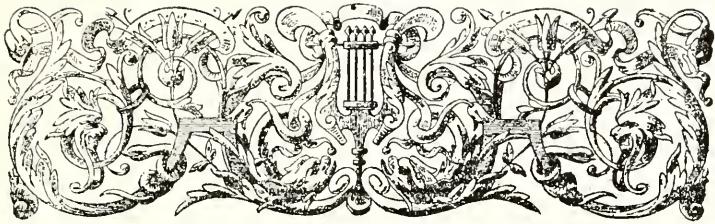
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## A GERMAN POEM

BY FREDERICK AUGUSTUS MÜHLENBERG.

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AMONG the heroic characters prominent in the shaping of our present form of government, few men stand out in bolder relief than Frederick Augustus Mühlenberg, the preacher, statesman and scholar of the Revolutionary period. His political career commenced when he was elected to fill a vacancy in the Continental Congress, March 2, 1779. He was re-elected upon the expiration of his term, and took his seat with the Pennsylvania delegation, November 13th of the same year; whereupon he was immediately appointed upon the Committee on the Treasury. His various services in the Continental Congress, particularly as chairman of the Medical Committee which virtually made him director-general of the military hospitals, are all well known facts in our history. His subsequent election to the Pennsylvania Assembly, whereof, at the opening session, November 3, 1780, he was elected Speaker, being successively re-elected in the Assemblies of 1781-1782, and his election to the Board of Censors of Pennsylvania, of which he was chosen president, an office filled by him until the dissolution of that body September 25, 1784, all tended to increase the renown of the Pennsylvania-German preacher-statesman as a parliamentarian, and to exhibit his peculiar fitness as a presiding officer.

When, shortly after the close of the American Revolution, it was found that the articles of confederation were unsuitable for



the permanent existence of the United Colonies, and the present Constitution was submitted to the various States for adoption, we again find him in the front battling for stable government. It may be well for our New England friends and other writers to remember when they aim the darts of their ill-timed jests at the Pennsylvania-Dutch, that it was Frederick Augustus Mühlenberg, a Pennsylvania-German in the fullest sense of the term, who presided over the convention in which the present Constitution of the United States was adopted. When the present form of government was organized the subject of our sketch was elected as the Speaker of the first House of Representatives. He then served successively in the Second, Third and Fourth Congresses, being chosen again as Speaker of the Third Congress, and in the Fourth as chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

It was while serving in this capacity, in the critical period caused by the negotiation of the Jay Treaty, that Frederick Augustus Mühlenberg cast the deciding vote in favor of an appropriation for carrying out the provisions of the treaty, thereby insuring peace and prosperity to our country.

It is not, however, with the political career of the "First Speaker" that this paper is intended to deal, but to place him before the present generation in the *rôle* of a German poet, and at the same time to reprint a poem written by him when he was but eighteen years of age. It has lately been discovered among a number of similar effusions in the archives of the *Waisenhaus* at Halle, and thus far seems to have escaped the notice of local investigators.

It is well known to the descendants of the Mühlenberg family and to students of Pennsylvania history, that Mühlenberg, throughout his whole political career, never neglected the German language, much of his private correspondence being written therein. The same applies to numerous newspaper articles which appeared at different times in the periodicals of the day.

The poem here reproduced was written upon the occasion of the death of Gotthilf August Francke, September 2, 1769, who











**D. GOTTHILF AUGUSTUS FRANCKIUS.**  
CONSILIAR. SENAT. SACRI IN DUC. SAGH. ORD. THEOLOG. ET ACAD.  
HAL. SENIOR INSPECTOR DIOECES. I. CIRC. SAL. ARCHIDIAC. AD B. M. V. ET MINIST.  
HAL. SEN. PAEDAG. REG. ET ORPHANOTR. GLAUCH. DIRECTOR.  
NAT. HAL. d. 21. Mart. ST. V. 1696. BEATE. OBIT. IBID. d. 2. Septemb. 1769.



was then the head of the Francke (Halle) institutions, to which the three Mühlenberg scions had been sent to prepare for the ministry.

The elder Mühlenberg, as is well known, was sent to America through the instrumentality of the elder (August Hermann) Francke; and when his second son was baptized in the old Augustus Church at the Trappe, in Pennsylvania, *Herr Professor* Francke [Gotthilf August] son of the above, and *Ew: Hofprediger* [Friedrich Michael] Ziegenhagen of London, appear as titulary sponsors to the young Friedrich August Conrad Mühlenberg, his grandfather Conrad Weiser being the actual sponsor and proxy for the other two. It will be noticed that the young child bore one of the names of each sponsor.<sup>1</sup>

The three Mühlenberg boys left Philadelphia April 27, 1763, and after a short sojourn in London reached Halle September 1st. The subject of our sketch was then but thirteen years old. How Peter the eldest chafed under the restraint of the discipline at the Francke Pädagogium, and suddenly took his departure, is well known. The two younger brothers, however, proved more tractable and studious. So closely did they apply themselves to their studies, it is said, both boys in less than three years, while they had perfected themselves in the German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew tongues, actually forgot all they had known of English upon their arrival.

Be this as it may, young Friedrich, being the god-child of the Reverend Director, was taken under his immediate care and tutelage, and both brothers, though young in years, made rapid progress in the *Gottesgelahrtheit* of the day.

Upon the sixth anniversary of their arrival at Halle a sad calamity overtook the celebrated Halle Institution. This was the death of the Director, Gotthilf August Francke. It was upon this mournful occasion that Frederick, the theological student, composed the following poem upon the death of his friend, sponsor and benefactor. When it was presented to the

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<sup>1</sup> See Matricul of the Augustus Kirche: born January 2, 1750; baptized January 15th.









THE MUHLENBERG FAMILY.



HON. FREDERICK AUGUST CONRAD MUHLENBERG.

GEN. JOHN PETER GABRIEL MUHLENBERG.

REV. HENRY MELCHIOR MUHLENBERG, D. D.

REV. GOTTHILF HEINRICH ERNST MUHLENBERG, D. D.

REV. JOHN CHRISTOPHER KUNZE, D. D.



faculty it also bore the signature of the youngest brother, Gott-hilf Heinrich Ernst,<sup>1</sup> then not yet sixteen years of age.

So well was this effort of the Pennsylvanian received, that it was incorporated among the *Trauer und Trost Schriften* in the *Denkmal der schuldigen Hochachtung und Liebe* to the late G. A. Francke.<sup>2</sup>

The two brothers, shortly after the death of their friend and tutor, left the Saline City on the Saale, and returned to America, arriving in Pennsylvania in the following year. At the next general Synod, held at Reading in the fall of the same year, they both appeared before the Examining Board of Ministers, and gave such proof of their qualifications that they were ordained to the holy ministry (*collaboratores ministerii*) October 25, 1770, though neither of them was yet of a legal age.

The poem, which is a veritable literary curiosity, full of rhythm and pathos, is here reproduced *verbatim et literatim* from the original print.

Wie, wenn ein wilder Sturm die hohe Ceder splittert,  
Die andre Bäume übersieht,  
Sie fällt—ihr Heer befiederter Bewohner zittert,  
Und aus der Zweige Schutz entflieht :

So zitterten auch wir, so traf auch uns das Wetter,  
Als unser Francke : Gute Nacht !  
Als unser VATER, unser FÜHRER, unser RETTER  
Zum letzten mal : Ich sterbe ! sagt.

Denn blickt' SEIN starres Aug noch einmal auf zum Himmel,  
Und dachte GOTT, und uns, und sich,  
Verliess die Welt und all ihr tobendes Getümmel,  
Und eilt,—und nun—SEIN Geist entwich,

<sup>1</sup> Born November 17th ; baptized December 4, 1753.

<sup>2</sup> Denkmal | der Schuldigen Hochachtung und Liebe | gestiftet | dem Weiland | Hochwürdigen und Hochgelarten | HERRN | D. GOTTHILF AUGUST | FRANCKEN, | Königl. Preuss. Consistorialrath im Herzogtum Magdeburg | der Friedrichs Universität, der Theologischen Facultät und des Stadt | Ministerii Senior und erster Inspector im Saalkreis, wie auch des | Pädagogii Regii und des Waisenhauses Director |

HALLE in der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses 1770.



Und schwingt sich freudig hin, zu jenen höhern Sphären,  
Die nur ein Seraph singen kan,  
(Wir wagens nicht) vereint mit den verklärten Heeren  
Bückt ER sich tief, und betet an.

Den GOTT, dem ER gedient, und unter dessen Knechten  
Ein andrer Simeon ER war.  
Nun feiret ER dankbar zu Seines GOTTes Rechten  
Ein langes frohes Jubeljahr.

Den Boten sahen wir durch unzählbare Mengen  
Das bleiche Angesicht verhüllt,  
Da war die Luft mit bangen lauten Klaggesängen  
Verlassner Waisen angefüllt.

Ach unser Vater stirbt, so klagten einst die Stämme  
Um Samuel, da er entschlief.  
ER flieht von uns ! Wer ists, der unsre Thränen hemme ?  
So ächzen FRANCKENS Waisen tief.

So klagen wir, auch wir, die aus entferntem Lande  
Gekommen sind, um IHN zu sehn.  
Ach mussten wir darum von DELAWARENS Strande  
Von den beglückten Ufern gehn,

Um SEINEN Abschied hier noch bitterer zu schmecken,  
Als dort in PHILADELPHIA :  
Mit Blässe muss SEIN Aug der Todesengel decken,  
SEIN Auge, das so heiter sah,

Wenn es empfindungsvoll in unverstellten Thränen  
Am GOTT geheiligten Altar  
Zerfloss ! wenn ER im Geist von überirdischen Scenen  
Ein heilger Seher GOTTes war.

Und Wenn Sein zartes Herz ein Heer verlassner Waisen  
Arm, elend und in Nöthen sah,  
Denn musste man den ewigen Wohlthäter, preisen,  
Den man im Bild am FRANCKEN sah.

Dein selger Geist blickt noch, Verklärter, auf uns nieder,  
Die ER in Kedars Hütten liess,  
Verherrlicht singt DEIN Mund in Salem Jubellieder,  
Viel schwächer singen wir nur dis.



Erhalter, Schöpfer, Gott, Jehova, deine Güte,  
Die sich noch stets erneuert zeigt,  
Die sey auch über uns—Sie tröste das Gemüthe  
Der Gattin, die der Schlag so beugt.

Und kräftig tröste den, der noch um FRANCKEN weinet,  
Und jedes arme Waisenkind—  
Begleite du auch uns !—bis wir mit dir vereinet  
Bey dir in Salems Hütten sind.

Kindliche Zähren zweer Brüder,  
vergossen von  
FRIEDRICH AUGUST CONRAD MÜHLENBERG,  
GOTTHILF HEINRICH ERNST MÜHLENBERG,  
aus Philadelphia in Amerika,  
der heiligen Gottesgelahrtheit Beflissenen.

JULIUS FRIEDRICH SACHSE.

PHILADELPHIA, *January, 1897.*

















